



South Bay MUG Macintosh

Mar/Apr 2012

A Monthly CUPFUL for South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members

Award Time for Ideas That Shine

by DAVID POGUE, *New York Times*

For tech aficionados, this is an exciting time for a much different reason. It's time for the 7th annual Pogie Awards!

These awards, presented each year in the cafetorium of the James A. Garfield Middle School in The Dalles, Ore., celebrate innovation in technology. As always, these awards don't go to the best products of the year; what could be more boring? Instead, the Pogies celebrate the best ideas of the year: ingenious features that somehow made it out of committee and into real-world products, even if the resulting products aren't that great.

VERBATIM STAY 'N' STORE 16- GIGABYTE FLASH DRIVE (\$25). Imagine a USB flash drive so small, you can barely even tell it's there. You leave it plugged into your laptop all the time. It's like adding storage without having to open up your machine.

The Stay 'n' Store is not particularly fast. But it's a quick, easy, convenient way to take the strain off an overstuffed hard drive.

GOWATCHIT.COM In the new Blockbuster-storeless world, where are we supposed to get our movies? At the moment, the answer is unclear. Netflix and Amazon stream some movies; Vudu and iTunes sell some recent ones; Red-box offers a few movies in DVD vending machines; Netflix still mails DVDs. But no source has all movies. Some movies aren't available in any format. And trying to find a particular movie among all these sources is time-consuming homework.

At Gowatchit.com, you can find out right now where, how and if a movie is available with one quick search. You can also ask to be notified when it becomes available. (Why aren't all movies available through all channels? The movie companies these days must have some irrational fear of giving the customers what they want.)

SOUNDRACER (\$32). Imagine plugging a small pod into your car's cigarette lighter — and turning your boring suburbmobile into a thrilling, far more expensive sports car. Well, at least your car will sound like that thrilling sports car.

As you accelerate, slow down, shift, cruise and idle, appropriate sounds emerge from your sound system. All the sonic pleasure of a roaring V8— for \$32.

As one of its Amazon reviews puts it, "Yes, it's a little flimsy. Yes, sometimes it doesn't work right. But when it does work, it is awesome."

HTC RHYME (\$200 with two-year Verizon contract). At first glance, the Rhyme looks like JAAC (just another Android cellphone). But its quest to win women's hearts expresses itself in a truly brilliant way: it comes with a light-up, clip-on "charm" on a long thin wire that plugs into the headphone jack.

The idea is that you can carry the phone inside your purse or bag, and clip the small cube-shape charm onto the outside. When a call or text message comes in, or when you've missed a call, blinking patterns signal you to fish out the phone.

The Rhyme also comes with a second killer idea: a wireless charging stand. When you set the phone into this stand, it charges magnetically and instantly fires up the alarm-clock app. It's a great runner-up idea, even if it's modeled on the Motorola Droid's bedside dock, a 2009 Pogie award winner. *Cont'd on page 7.*

**Our next SBAMUG meeting is
March 28: Can You Live With
iPad Alone?**

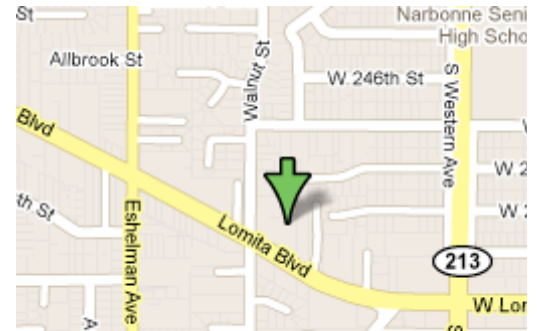
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Welcome to the SBAMUG South Bay Apple Mac User Group

Members, friends and colleagues are invited to attend our monthly meetings. The \$35 annual membership dues entitle you to receive this monthly newsletter by mail or online, plus many more benefits (page 8). To become a member or get more info please check our website.



Lomita Veteran's Hall,
1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita

Meetings: Lomita Veteran's Hall,
1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita
Mail: PO Box 432, Redondo Beach, CA
90277-0432
Phone: (310) 644-3315
Email: info@sbamug.com
Website: <http://www.sbamug.com>

SBAMUG Monthly Calendar

March 28: Can You Live With iPad Alone? (Mac/Laptop vs. iPad)

April 25: Media Center

*****Read this newsletter online (active hyperlinks!) at <http://www.sbamug.com/newsletter.html>*****

SBAMUG Meeting Format:

6:30—7:30 p.m. Questions & answers and Sharing: Everyone is welcome, beginners encouraged
7:30—7:45 p.m. 'iSocial' – shoot the Mac breeze with others over a cookie
7:50—9:00 p.m. Announcements and Program

***Refreshments provided; donations appreciated!*

Submit suggestions for topics or speakers, or articles, ideas & original artwork for this newsletter by the last Wednesday of each month. Articles may be edited to fit space. Submit to: ptownsend@sbamug.com

Other Meetings:

- 1st Sat. Core Group 10 a.m. – Location variable. Ask at the meetings or email: info@sbamug.com
- Special interest groups (SIGs): Ask at the meetings or email: info@sbamug.com
- Last Sat.- Northrop Grumman-Ham Radio & Computer Swap Meet, 7--11:30 a.m. meet at SE corner of Marine/Aviation Blvd, Redondo Beach
- Los Angeles Portable Users Group: Mac OS X, iPhone, iPod, MacBook, etc., <http://www.lapug.org/>
- Find more <http://www.apple.com/usergroups/>

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Membership Report – 134 members

Please wear your membership card as your name tag at our monthly meetings.

Thank You Member Renewals: Allan Boodnick, Alice Patterson, Tom Rische, Robert Goodman, Joan Kraus, Paul Curry, Sybil Goldenblank, Burt Belzer, Terri foley, Margaret Wehbi, Jane Van Tour, Victor Kosuda.

Contact Membership Chair CW Mitchell for any corrections: cwmitchell@sbamug.com. Renew at the meetings or by mail.

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PD-CD JIM PERNAL MARCH 2012 PUBLIC DOMAIN CD

Ten items this month. One item this month, Pixelmator, has a demo version, and if you want the full version, you will have to obtain it via the Mac App store. It's a good program, so I will include it here. I try not to make a habit of this, knowing that many who purchase the PD CD are on older machines, with older operating systems that cannot access the App store.

1Password-3.8.17.zip Bug and compatibility fixes to this password utility, once again. Lets you store all your passwords and sync them with other Macs and IOS devices. Shareware \$49.99 Intel Mac OSX 10.6 or better.

AviationWeather.wdgt.zip Widget to obtain the current weather conditions and forecasts at airports. Aimed towards pilots, but anyone can use this. You can lookup by name or ICAO designator. Freeware PPC/Intel Mac OSX 10.4 or better.

Bean-Install.zip A "lean" word processor program is how this one is described. Has word count, zoom slider, and can access the dictionary. Freeware PPC/Intel OS X 10.5 or higher

ccc-3.4.4.dmg Program to make bootable backups of your hard drive. This version adds improved presets, and now lets you backup your recovery partition (new for OSX 10.7) too. \$15 to eliminate banners, free if you will put up with them. PPC/Intel OS X 10.4.8 or better.

CocktailLionEdition.dmg Utility to clean, repair, and tweak your OS. Intel OS X 10.7 Shareware \$19

HomeInventory.dmg Keep track of your possessions. Add photos and receipts to each item. Can generate reports. CSV format for import and export. PPC/Intel OSX 10.5 or higher. Shareware \$14.99

Pacifist_3.0.1.zip Utility to open up installer packages, and extract or install individual files. OSX 10.4.11 or better. Shareware \$20.00

PerfectTablePlan_4_2_7.dmg Create a seating plan for your event. Adjust size and arrangement of tables. Shareware \$29.95 PPC/Intel OSX 10.3.9 or better.

Pixelmator-1.zip Image editor. This version has new improved vector graphics tools. Intel OSX 10.6. Shareware \$29.95

VidConvert.dmg Final item this month is a audio and video converter program. Outputs to iphone, iPad, Quicktime, and Windows media formats among others. PPC/Intel OSX 10.5 or better. Shareware \$7.99

CD for this month will be at the April 2012 meeting, labeled as the March-April CD. I'll see you at the March meeting.

Jim Pernal PD Editor

App of the Month

Brought to you by the Core Group.

Dragon Dictation: An easy-to-use voice recognition application powered by Dragon NaturallySpeaking that allows you to speak and instantly see text or email messages. Free. <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/dragon-dictation/id341446764?mt=8>

Evernote: From notes to ideas to snapshots to recordings, put it all into Evernote and watch as it instantly synchronizes from your iPhone to your Mac or Windows desktop. Free. <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/evernote/id281796108?mt=8>

The new iPad

We'd feel remiss if there was no mention of the new iPad in this newsletter. I get the feeling people made up their minds to order or hold before the anticipated March roll out. It all went down as expected, Apple CEO Cook held his own, and yours truly—being one of those who held out for a year before getting an iPad by any name—has her name on a list. What's your story? Hear about the new iPad at the March 28th meeting. *P. Townsend, Editor* http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/did-tim-cook-measure-up-to-jobs-at-new-ipad-event/2012/03/08/gIQA9R17yR_story.html

Clean Your Screen

by Phil Russell, CMUG Member

How do you clean your iPod, iPad, iPhone or Mac screen? How about your glasses? I use a microfiber cloth. In fact I bought one large piece of microfiber and cut it into 5x5 inch pieces. I have one at my computer, one in the car, one by the bed, one between kitchen and dining area.

You can find microfiber cloth at many places. The best I found was 12 6"x7" 200 mg microfiber cleaning cloths plus one premium Logo Microfiber Cleaning Cloth as a gift, for a total of 13 pieces. They can be used wet or dry for a streak free finish! They clean glass, acrylic, vinyl, fiberglass, stainless steel, chrome, mirrors, granite, tv's (even big screens!).

Hand or machine wash with detergent and/or bleach - air dry (no machine dry) - no fabric softener! Long lasting! Each microfiber is individually and neatly packed in it's own polyurethane plastic bag. The cost is \$11.99 at <http://tinyurl.com/88am2yl> at Amazon.

Apple's Mountain Lion Makes the Mac More Like the iPad

David Pogue, *Pogue's Posts*, NY Times, 2/16/2012

Apple's iPhones and iPads get most of the attention, but Apple is now directing the spotlight on the Mac.

There had been rumors swirling that Apple was back-burnering the Mac, but that's hard to believe after Thursday's announcement: from now on, Apple will update Mac OS X once a year. It will start this summer with Mac OS X 10.8, code-named Mountain Lion, only a year after the Lion version was released.

Now you'll have to decide once a year whether or not to succumb to paying annually the \$30 (or whatever Apple winds up charging) for the privilege of remaining current.

The real shocker, though, is that for the first time, Apple decided to give tech reviewers an early, early version of Mountain Lion — not just months before its release to the public, but even before its release to its developer (programmer) community.

When Lion came along last summer, the big changes were all about making the Mac more like an iPad. Trackpad gestures simulated the multitouch gestures on an iPad screen. Lion features like Full Screen mode, Auto Save and Launchpad are total iPad rip-offs, too; if Apple hadn't stolen these features from itself, it would surely be suing for copyright infringement.

Well, don't look now, but Mountain Lion brings even more of the iPhone/iPad features to the Mac. The juiciest payoff here is the suite of Mac apps that now mimic what's on the iPhone/iPad, like Reminders, Notes, Messages and Game Center. Through your free iCloud account, all of these apps are synced instantly and smoothly across all your Apple gadgets. On the Mac, you type a reminder to yourself; it appears simultaneously on your iPhone.

Notes is cool: you can add photos to your notes, or change the font styles and sizes. (The font and size changes sync over to your iPhone/iPad, but not photos.) You can also pin a note to your desktop to make sure it grabs your attention.

Messages is particularly awesome. Now you can type little messages — or shoot photos or videos — to anyone else with an iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch or Mountain Lion Mac, right from your computer. These may feel like text messages, but they're free and don't involve the cellphone company. And because everything is synced up, you see the same conversation thread on all your gadgets. If you started a chat with your boss on the phone, you can get home from work, sit down at your Mac and see the whole transcript so far.

This new Messages app replaces the venerable iChat. Or, actually, adds onto it; all the old iChat features are still there. And you can download an early version of this app [from Apple's Web site](#).

Twitter is now built into many Mac programs, like Safari, iPhoto, Photo Booth, and Quick Look, so you can tweet almost anything. A Share button is built into many Mac apps now, too. For example, in the Safari Web browser, you can click it to share a Web page via Mail, Messages or Twitter. In Notes, the Share button offers to send a note by Mail or Messages. In Preview, the button offers Mail, Messages, Twitter, Flickr or AirDrop (the effortless Mac-to-Mac file sharing feature).

My favorite new feature, though, is the Notifications Center. It's that handsome dark-gray list of everything that has been trying to get your attention: incoming e-mail, Messages, alerts and reminders. On the iPhone, you summon this list by dragging your finger down from the top of the screen. On the Mac, you'll swipe two fingers from the right edge of the trackpad into the center. Wild. (You can also click a special button on the menu bar.)

When you do that, the Notifications Center slides onto the screen from the right, shifting the rest of the desktop to the left. It's gorgeous and Apple-like.

As on the phone, programs that want your attention can display either a banner (it appears for a few seconds at the upper-right corner of your screen, then disappears) or an alert box (which requires a click on a Close button, or a Show button to jump to the program that is waving its hand). You can specify which type you want (or none at all) on a per-program basis. Already, Calendar, Safari, Reminders, Messages, Mail, App Store, Software Update, Facetime and Game Center can display these notifications, and developers can tap into the Notification Center in their own apps.

And how do you avoid being bombarded by alerts for every single incoming e-mail all day? A new feature lets you flag certain people as V.I.P.'s — you click a little star icon in the new Mail app next to their names. Only messages from V.I.P.'s try to catch your eye in the Notification Center.

There are lots of other little changes (over 100, Apple says). A few highlights:

- The Game Center, a central hub for pairing up anonymous players of games across the Internet, now comes to the Mac, too. Apple says that 100 million people have signed up for Game Center on the iPhone/iPad, and 20,000 games are compatible — and now that the Game Center is on the Mac, you can play against all those people on their phones and pads.
- If you have an Apple TV, you'll love this: Now you can project whatever is on your Mac to your TV, wirelessly. Yes, the iOS feature called AirPlay has now come to the Mac. Think slide shows, classroom demos, YouTube videos, Netflix movies — with one click, it's all on your TV, at 720p hi-def resolution, instead of only on your little Mac screen. *Continued on page 5.*

- When you open one of the iWork apps, like Pages or Keynote, you see two buttons for opening or saving your documents: “iCloud” and “on my Mac.” That is, you can now keep and edit your documents online, for easy access (and syncing) from any Apple gadget. Within this filing screen, you can create folders the iPhone way: by dragging documents onto each other.
- Gatekeeper is a new security system. It controls which downloaded apps you can install on your own Mac. You have three choices: Mac App Store Only (that is, apps approved and prechecked by Apple); App Store and Identified Developers (software companies Apple knows about); and Anywhere. Viruses and other malware have not been a real problem on the Mac, but this new blockade will be ready if they become one.
- The app names have been changed to match the iPhone/iPad. So Address Book is now called Contacts; iCal is now Calendar; iChat is now Messages.
- Lots more features for Chinese users, including a character-recognition system that updates the Mac’s Chinese dictionary as new words enter the popular lexicon. The Chinese equivalents of Google, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook are now integrated with Share buttons and other spots, just as they are on the American version.
- There’s a Search button on the Launchpad (Lion’s app launcher screen, like the Home screen on the iPhone/iPad).
- When you’re screen-sharing with another Mac (great for tech support), you can swap files by drag and drop.
- Safari has a unified search/address bar.
- You can fill out PDF forms right in Preview, the built-in PDF reading program.
- In Calendar, the list of categories (Family, Work, Kids, etc.) is once again a sidebar panel that you can leave open. (Apple acknowledges that making it a pop-up bubble in Lion was sort of a mistake.)
- There’s a Groups column in Contacts.
- There’s a new widgets browser in Dashboard.

Over all, Mountain Lion shows that Apple is continuing to unify its ecosystem — to bring the same apps, interfaces and data to all Apple gadgets. It’s a calculated, evilly smart way to make staying within the Apple family even more desirable, comfortable and useful. All your data is waiting for you in identical format and placement on every Apple gadget. All of its operating systems are starting to look more alike, and all of your data is becoming more synced and more accessible.

You have to wonder how Apple intends to keep up this pace of change to Mac OS X every summer without gunking it up.

<http://pogue.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/16/apples-mountain-lion-makes-the-mac-more-like-the-ipad/>

Organize Apps on iPad

by Phil Russell, CMUG Member

So you’ve bought a bunch of apps, perhaps it’s a good time to organize them. There are many ways to do this, including using iTunes or physically dragging apps around on your iPad.

To rearrange apps on your iPad, touch an app and hold down until the app icons jiggle. Then, arrange the icons by dragging them. Press the home button to save your arrangement.

If you have many apps, you can arrange and create up to 11 screens or pages. The dots above the Dock show the number of screens you have and the white one shows you the one you are currently viewing.

For apps you use frequently, you can create a shortcut by making those apps available on every page. Touch and hold an app and when they start to jiggle, drag the app or folder of apps to the bottom of the screen (dock). This will allow you to find an app quickly, no matter which page you are on. To drag a folder into the dock, you will have to create it first on the screen, then drag it to the dock.

You can organize your apps via iTunes if you prefer. Launch iTunes and connect your iPad. Select your iPad and tap Apps tab at top of page. You will see your apps and the different pages on which they appear on your iPad. Select an app and drag it to a different page to move it to that page.

You can create folders the same way by dragging an app onto another app. iPad automatically names a folder when you create it based on the icons used to create the folder. You can change the folder name by tapping the x and typing a new folder name. You can put up to 20 icons in a folder.

To get rid of the folder, drag the apps out to the desktop. There are many ways you can arrange your apps including by location, alphabet or categories.

Alphabetical. To arrange your apps alphabetically, on your iPad, tap Settings > General > Reset > Reset Home Screen Layout. This will make your first page default to the original Apple apps. Beginning on the 2nd page, your apps will appear alphabetically. You have to do this each time you add an app to keep it in order or rearrange them after buying new apps.

Categories. Apple has currently listed 20 categories of apps. Perhaps you can create a folder for each category and arrange your apps accordingly. The categories (in alphabetical order) are: Books, Business, Education, Entertainment, Finance, Games, Healthcare & Fitness, Lifestyle, Medical, Music, Navigation, News, Photography, Productivity, Reference, Social Networking, Sports, Travel, Utilities, Weather.




When you have begun accumulating apps, take a little bit of time to organize them. A little time spent organizing can well save time and increase your productivity.

One trick for getting iTunes Match to recognize older tracks

by [Michael Rose](#), TUAW, Nov 20th 2011 at 12:00PM

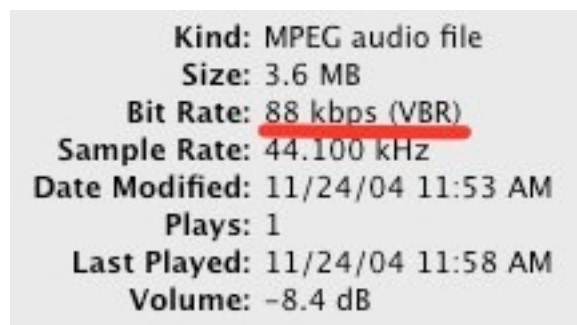
Welcome, iTunes Match users. After you've coughed over your 25 bucks and waited all night for your music library to reconcile with the great iCloud in the sky, you may have noticed those mysterious cloud status icons scattered through your tracks. Apple's tech note summarizes the icons; Macworld's thorough rundown gives more status detail and recommends that you add the iCloud Status column to your iTunes list view for diagnostic purposes.

Resolution

Icon	Description	Definition
	Ineligible	This icon is displayed when a track is not recognized by iTunes Match. Some examples are songs that are too old or have a low bitrate.
	Removed	This icon is displayed when a track has been deleted from your library or is otherwise associated with a removed album.
	Error	This icon may be displayed when there is an issue updating iTunes Match. To resolve the issue, try importing the track again.

In my library, I saw a fairly substantial number of 'ineligible' icons, mostly on tracks that I had imported from my CD collection years and years ago. Some of my most vintage files show a 'Date Modified' in 1999, and were encoded into MPEG-1 Layer 2 (yes, an MP2 file) with MPeacker or SoundJam MP (get off my lawn). Most of these, however, were recognized just fine by iTunes Match; more recent files seemed to have trouble.

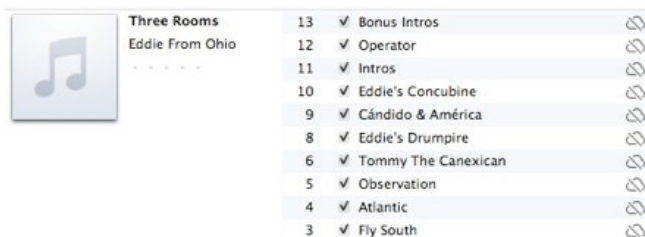
Checking the standards of the iTunes Match process, Apple's tech note shows that only certain music files are fit for matching. If your music was encoded below a bitrate of 96 kbps, iTunes Match will simply skip over it.



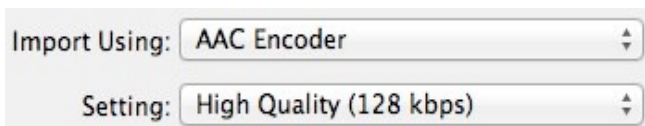
When I took a closer look at my problem tracks, the issue was clear: in an attempt to save some disk space way back when, I had opted to go with variable-bitrate (VBR) MP3 files when ripping these CDs. This took somewhat longer, but kept quality reasonably high while creating smaller files.

Present-day me is now somewhat irked with past-me; how to get these vintage tracks synchronized with iTunes Match? I figured out a way, which was independently pointed out by Lex Friedman last week.

As Richard enthusiastically realized in June, one of the most helpful features of iTunes Match is how it 'normalizes' any tracks that exist in the iTunes store catalog up to 256 kbps AAC files, the same quality as iTunes Plus music that you buy from the store. While he was interested in lowering the storage requirements of his audiophile-friendly (and massive) ALAC files, this fix works in the other direction: getting low-bitrate or variable-bitrate files up to the standards of current-day digital music.



Step 1: Sort your library by the iCloud Status or cloud icon column. Just click on the column name to sort the track list, and then scroll to the end where all the ineligible songs are. You can take this an album at a time, to keep it simple. In the image above, you see an album's worth of ineligible songs. You can click a track and choose Get Info (⌘-I) from the File menu to verify that the problem is inadequate bitrate.



Step 2: Double-check your iTunes import/conversion settings. You'll find these under the iTunes preferences, in General, when you click the button marked "Import Settings." For our purposes, AAC 128 kbps "High Quality" is fine, and chances are that's the default setting you already had. Click OK and close the Preferences dialog.



Continued on page 7.

EPSON MEGAPLEX MG850HD (\$650). The Megaplex is a handsome, bright projector for boardrooms, home theaters and so on. It does all the usual projectory things — it even has an iPod/ iPad/iPhone charging jack that lets you watch your videos and photo slide shows on a wall or a screen.

The Pogie award-winning feature here, though, is a customizable startup screen. You can add your contact information here, perhaps an “if found, please call” message, or, in a school or business situation, a message like, “For tech support, call Chaz in IT, extension 381.” When the projector turns on, this start-up message is the first thing that appears.

Frankly, an “If found, please call” startup message should be available on every cellphone, music player, tablet, laptop and remote control.

ICOOKBOOK (\$5). When you're cooking, your hands get grubby, sticky and wet — not the ideal situation for handling electronics. This recipe app (for iPad, iPhone or Android) adds a screamingly obvious feature: hands-free page turning. You can turn pages (and start or stop cooking timers) with voice commands.

NYKO ZOOM FOR KINECT (\$20). Microsoft's Kinect attachment for the Xbox was a revelation: it lets you play games without a hand-held controller. Instead, the Kinect has built-in cameras that recognize your entire body. Play tennis just by swinging your arm; your on-screen character mimics you.

You need a lot of space to move, making the Kinect a tough sell for small dorm rooms. The Zoom is a wide-angle snap-on lens that “reduces the play range required to enjoy Kinect software by up to 40 percent, allowing you to play closer to your TV.”

It doesn't actually work very well. But Pogies are all about the idea, not the execution.

AUDIO BULBS (\$300). I know I reviewed these only a couple of weeks ago, but Audio Bulbs still represent one of the best ideas of the year: they're combination speaker/light bulbs. You screw them into any lamp or ceiling fixture, and suddenly you have yourself a wireless sound system in your house. There's a transmitter for your sound source (like an iPhone, iPod or CD player) and for controlling the dimming level of these LED bulbs. Wireless sound in 30 seconds? That's a Pogie!

SUNBRITE OUTDOOR TVS (\$1,762 for the 32-incher). “Outdoor HDTV” is one of those phrases that makes you instinctively nervous, like “lead baby rattle” or “radical president.” In general, electronics just don't go well with rain, snow, bugs, dirt, baking heat or freezing cold. But these TVs are made for just such situations: patios, gazebos, parks, poolside. They're supposed to be extra-bright and antireflective, for added dedication to their mission.

MAC APP STORE Apple has decided that the DVD is dead. The future of video-watching and software-downloading, it thinks, is the Internet. To that end, it has created the Mac App Store, so that we can buy our computer programs the same way we buy iPhone apps — by downloading.

The idea has some overwhelming advantages, at least if you have a fast Internet connection. You don't worry about viruses or spyware. The installation is instantaneous; you're not even asked for your Mac password. You never have to install patches or updated versions; the version you're downloading is always the latest. You never have to hunt for the original installation disks; the App Store is a storage locker for everything you've ever bought, and it's available from any machine.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/29/technology/personaltech/the-pogies-celebrate-better-living-through-gadgetry.html?pagewanted=all>

Step 3: Select all the tracks in the album you want to iCloud-ify. Right-click or control-click any of the selected tracks and choose “Create AAC Version” (also available under the Advanced menu in iTunes). Watch the tracks convert before your eyes.

Step 4: Once the conversion is done, you'll have two copies of those songs in your library: the older VBR tracks, and the just-converted AAC 128 tracks. iTunes Match automatically kicks in and begins scanning the 'new' tracks, and (since they now meet the minimum criteria for matching) they're matched!

If they exist in the iTunes store, the iCloud versions of them will be the store's iTunes Plus 256 kbps version; if not, they'll be the 128 kbps AAC versions you just created. You can tell the difference by looking in the iCloud Status column, which will helpfully say 'Matched' or 'Uploaded.'

At this point, for your tracks with 'Uploaded' status, what you've got is what you've got: VBR originals and AAC re-conversions, which may be a bit lower quality than the source files. If you have the disk space to keep both, you can, or give the AACs a listen and see if they sound OK to you. The other alternative is going back to the CDs to capture those files at a higher bitrate.

For the tracks with 'Matched' status, however, you can revitalize them to current standards by actually -- gulp! -- deleting your local copies and downloading the matched versions to replace them. Macworld has a walkthrough of using Smart Playlists to do this for the entire library, or you can go an album at a time if it makes you nervous to delete huge tracts of tracks (or if your Internet connectivity is metered and you can't safely download gigabytes of music at one go).

Simply delete both your originals and your local matches -- careful NOT to check the box to delete from iCloud -- and note that the matched tracks stay listed, with a little download icon next to them. Click it to grab the full-glory version of the song back from iCloud, or optionally just leave it in the cloud until you need it again to save yourself some disk space.

<http://www.tuaw.com/2011/11/20/one-trick-for-getting-itunes-match-to-recognize-older-tracks/>

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